

## MDCR/MCRC E-newsletter for May 29, 2015



### [In Mackinac: Making a business case for racial equity](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/29

It's tough to talk race at a business conference — especially one like the Mackinac Policy Conference, where so many of the participants are elites whose concerns, quite appropriately, run more toward their bottom lines.

### [Diversifying workforce urged to bridge '2 Detroits'](#)

From the Detroit News, 5/28

Mackinac Island — Race was the focus of a townhall session Thursday at the Detroit Regional Chamber's Mackinac Policy Conference, where some participants urged more workforce diversity in Detroit to bridge a gap between downtown and the neighborhoods.

### [Disability group aims to make Pere Marquette Park Beach more accessible for all](#)

From MLive, 5/28

MUSKEGON — To Tamera Collier, executive director at Disability Network West Michigan, too many Muskegon residents are trekking to Ludington to enjoy an outdoor treasure that should be fully accessible to all: Lake Michigan.

### [Former Forest Hills student to settle with district over sex-assault, harassment claims](#)

From MLive, 5/27

A former student at Forest Hills Central has settled her lawsuit against the district over its response to her report she had been sexually assaulted by a prominent athlete, court records show.

### [Hartford Schools sued over alleged bullying](#)

From WOOD, 5/27

HARTFORD, Mich. — Hartford Public Schools is the defendant in a federal lawsuit alleging the district and some staff knew a student was being bullied but didn't take the proper steps to stop it.

### [Column: Mackinac Conference should address race in Detroit — in Detroit](#)

From MLive/Bridge Magazine, 5/26

Organizers of the Detroit Regional Chamber's Mackinac Policy Conference, which takes place this week on Mackinac Island, recently announced that race and inclusion, particularly as they relate to recovering Detroit, would be on the table this year.

### [Washtenaw deputies investigating possible anti-gay hate crime](#)

From MLive, 5/26

Washtenaw County sheriff's deputies believe that a man who was assaulted and robbed Monday night could have been targeted due to his sexual orientation.

### [Cleveland Police Accept Use of Force Limits in Justice Dept. Deal](#)

From the New York Times, 5/26

CLEVELAND — The Cleveland police department, which has become synonymous with the racially charged debate over police tactics, has agreed to follow some of the most exacting standards in the nation over how and when its officers can use force, and it will accept close oversight to make sure those rules are not ignored, city and federal officials said Tuesday.

### **Panel Hears Case For Including Domestic Assault Victims In Elliott-Larsen**

From MIRS, 5/26

The Senate Judiciary Committee took preliminary testimony on legislation that, if passed, could include survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking in the state's anti-discrimination policy. Click to add MIRS Bill Hound SB 0255, whose primary sponsor is Sen. Rebekah WARREN (D-Ann Arbor), would add a provision in the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination against domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking victims.

The primary concern is protecting victims leaving abusive situations who are hoping to make new lives for themselves and find safe housing, Warren said. Domestic violence victims are more likely to face eviction than any other woman, she said, and a majority of homeless women are victims of severe sexual or physical abuse.

A victim's safety needs to be paramount if a situation is dangerous enough to require breaking a lease, she said. If a survivor was forced to break a lease discreetly due to a violent situation and has a bad record because of it, Warren said that person should be able to “get into new housing, be supported there and be safe without any additional victimization.”

Rebecca SCHIEMKE, chair of the State Bar of Michigan's Family Law Section, said landlords often take a “global view” of domestic violence cases by classifying both the victim and the perpetrator as problem tenants.

This could lead to victims being discouraged for seeking help or from getting out of a violent situation if they were concerned it could jeopardize their housing situation, she said.

Sen. Patrick COLBECK(R-Canton) said he was supportive of preventing discrimination against women enduring or escaping volatile situations, but worried Warren's bill as written did not have enough safeguards against those who might use domestic violence as an excuse to get out of debt obligations.

“You see so many people gaming the system,” he said. “I want to make sure that the bad guys have some accountability too.”

The Michigan Association of Realtors, as well as associations representing property owners and managers, expressed similar concerns.

Warren said many have approached her with suggestions for the legislation that she hopes to work with and potentially incorporate to help make the bill a success.

The committee also advanced Click to add MIRS Bill Hound SB 0351, a Sen. Rick JONES (R-Grand Ledge)-sponsored bill similar to legislation from last session that would prohibit attorneys from soliciting parties in divorce actions for legal services until 21 days had passed since the initial summons.

Bill supporters maintain the additional time bought by the 21 days could better protect domestic violence victims so their abusers are not tipped off by impeding legal action prematurely, potentially risking increased violence.

That bill was reported to committee 4-1, with Colbeck voting against. He said he had concerns that the bill would potentially infringe upon the Constitutional rights of lawyers.

### [Talent Loves English](#)

From the New York Times, 5/26

Eight hundred years ago next month, English noblemen forced King John to sign the Magna Carta. It's still having amazing effects on the world today. The Magna Carta helped usher in government with a separation of powers. It helped create conditions in which centralized authority could not totally control fiscal, political, religious or intellectual life. It helped usher in the modern Anglo-Saxon state model, with its relative emphasis on the open movement of people, ideas and things.

### [Should Michigan Have a More Inclusive Civil Rights Curriculum?](#)

From WDET, 5/21

On Redline, Bankole Thompson hosts a roundtable to discuss the failing grade that Michigan received for the civil rights curriculum standards taught throughout the state by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). Joining him are Arthur Horwitz, chairman of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, Barry Checkoway, professor of social work and urban planning at the University of Michigan. Two students at Detroit University Prep, Harmony Rhodes and Diego Navarrette, also join the discussion.

### [ACLU sues Michigan over transgender driver's licenses](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/21

The state of Michigan is being sued over its refusal to change gender identities on driver's licenses without a new birth certificate.

### [Boy Scout president calls for end to ban on gay leaders](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/21

The president of the Boy Scouts of America on Thursday called for an end to the group's ban on gay troop leaders.

### [Black health workers lose appeal in white patient care](#)

From the Detroit News, 5/21

GRAND RAPIDS – An appeals court has upheld a decision that kills a discrimination lawsuit filed by black home health care workers who were told they couldn't take care of a white patient.

### [Of Bikers and Thugs](#)

From the New York Times, 5/21

On Sunday, there was a deadly biker gang fight and massacre in Waco, Tex. Nine people were killed, and 18 others were injured.

### [Finley: Inclusion gets big role on Mackinac](#)

From the Detroit News, 5/20

After an absence of a decade, the issue of racial equity will reappear in a major role at next week's Mackinac Policy Conference. The reason: Business leaders fear their financial and emotional investment in Detroit could go up in smoke if the uprisings that have erupted in other places come here.

### [Snyder's next big thing: Data-driven criminal justice](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/20

There's nothing revolutionary about Gov. Rick Snyder's proposal to reform Michigan's expensive, inefficient criminal justice system.

### [In The Classroom And On the River, Modeling Success In Science](#)

From NPR, 5/20

To get a really good sense of why Caroline Solomon is a great teacher, you have to go into the field with her. On this particular morning, that means a boat on the Anacostia River.

### [Coalition pushes for diversity in tech fields](#)

From the Detroit News, 5/20

Detroit — When Angel Gambino was developing her technology startup, she was focused on cultivating relationships and finding talent.

### [Flying blind harder at Detroit airport](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/19

LANSING — A local couple has a starring role in a video they hope will convince Detroit Metropolitan Airport authorities to make travel easier again for mid-Michigan people with disabilities.

### [Foundations reach out to black males](#)

From the Detroit News, 5/19

Ninth-grader Rothus Stewart has his mind set on three things: studying engineering in college, playing basketball for Duke University and a better life for his mother.

### [Experts debate how to restore trust in police](#)

From the Detroit News, 5/19

Washington — Trust in local police agencies could be restored by shifting the “warrior” mentality long embedded in law-enforcement training to one of community “guardianship,” a policing expert told lawmakers here Tuesday.

### [Michigan House bill prohibits local wage, benefit laws](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/19

LANSING — Communities would not be allowed to pass ordinances regarding wages, benefits or working conditions in their towns under a bill that was passed 11-7 by the House Commerce and Trade committee Tuesday.

#### [Forecast: White Mich. 4th-graders' scores may trail nation](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/19

Much is made of poor achievement among minority groups, but a report out today says white students in Michigan are on track to be ranked 49th in the nation in fourth-grade reading by 2019 if the state doesn't change its path.

#### [The Memory Project art exhibit comes to Holocaust museum](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/17

FARMINGTON HILLS — A multi-media exhibit looking at a family's resilience and eventual joy despite trauma and loss stemming from World War II in Europe and the Holocaust is coming to the Detroit area.

#### [Housing Apartheid, American Style](#)

From the New York Times, 5/16

The riots that erupted in Baltimore last month were reminiscent of those that consumed cities all over the country during the 1960s. This rage and unrest was thoroughly explained five decades ago by President Lyndon Johnson's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, also known as the Kerner Commission. The commission's report was released in 1968 — the year that the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. touched off riots in 125 cities — and contains the most candid indictment of racism and segregation seen in such a document, before or since.

#### [Bills that aim for local wage regulations may hit LGBT nondiscrimination ordinances as well](#)

From MLive, 5/16

LANSING - Thirty-eight communities in Michigan have passed local ordinances that prohibit discrimination against members of the LGBT community, but that could be in jeopardy under new legislation.

#### [Sen. Gary Peters: Race relations must be examined with proposed criminal justice system reform](#)

From MLive, 5/15

From Ferguson, Mo. to Inkster, there is growing tension between police and citizens.

#### [U-M grad and new Boston University professor regrets tweets critical of whites](#)

From the Associated Press, 5/13

An incoming Boston University professor who called "white college males" a "problem population" and was publicly criticized by the university's president said on Tuesday she regrets making the remarks.

#### [Landlord sued for refusing tenants with kids](#)

From Michigan Radio, 5/13

A fair housing group is suing the owner of several apartment complexes for refusing to rent one-bedroom apartments to testers who said they had a child.

#### **House Panel Takes Up Savings Plans For Disabled Persons**

From Gongwer, 5/12

A new savings program called the Michigan Achieving a Better Life Experience Program Act, designed to help disabled individuals in the state, would be created under bills the House Financial Services Committee considered on Wednesday.

Part of the package (HB 4542\*, HB 4543\* and HB 4544\*) would create the ABLE savings plans, which would have some tax advantages.

The second bill would allow a taxpayer to deduct from taxable income contributions made to the account; allow a deduction for interest earned in a tax year on contributions into the account; and allow a deduction for qualified withdrawals from the account to the beneficiary.

One feature of the ABLE plans is that contributions to and distributions from the accounts would not count in determining eligibility for assistance under the state's Social Welfare Act.

Another part of the package (HB 4541\*) would increase the current maximum for total contributions for all accounts naming one individual as a beneficiary to \$500,000 from \$235,000 and include the ABLE funds in that limit.

Rep. Anthony Forlini (R-Harrison Township), chair of the committee and lead sponsor of the bills, said the legislation would allow those parents with limited resources to establish an account for their children with special needs without losing assistance.

He said currently if a parent put \$2,000 into an account, the child would lose benefits.

Mr. Forlini said \$235,000 might be enough today, but it may not be enough in the future. He said the increase in the maximum for these accounts puts the state at the highest in the country.

Lt. Governor Brian Calley said the way these savings accounts work today, a loss of eligibility for certain benefits is a barrier for parents to save for the future.

Mr. Calley said the ABLE Act came from Washington during a time when not a lot of good things are coming from the federal government.

"The idea is that we want have families and individuals to save without those savings putting in jeopardy the ongoing support that somebody might need," he said.

Mr. Calley said he was pleased the committee was moving quickly on the bills, and said he expects most or all states will follow suit during the next couple of years.

"We have an opportunity I think really to make a statement here in Michigan about how much of a priority this population is, that is often overlooked," he said.

The National Down Syndrome Association, Autism Speaks and the National Down Syndrome Association of North West Michigan, among other groups, provided support for the bill.

"The ABLE Act provides individuals with disabilities the same types of flexible savings tools that all other Americans have through college savings accounts, health savings accounts and individual retirement accounts," Sara Hart Weir with the National Down Syndrome Society said. "Families who have been able to set up regular 529 college savings accounts for their non-disabled children, now for the first time can save for their children with disabilities.

[Voters choose Harriet Tubman for \\$20 bill](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/12

The online voting effort to put a woman's image on a \$20 bill has chosen the face of its grassroots movement: Harriet Tubman, the 19th-Century abolitionist and Underground Railroad conductor for freedom-seeking slaves.

#### [Genesee County sheriff claims attorney's T-shirt is 'attack on women'](#)

From MLive, 5/12

Genesee County Sheriff Robert Pickell accused a local defense attorney of an "attack on women" because of a slogan printed on a T-shirt roughly six years ago advertising the attorney's law firm.

#### [Regional sheriffs suggest changes in law enforcement policy due to recent strained relationship with public, police](#)

From the Oakland Press, 5/12

Three regional sheriffs went public Tuesday with a plan to create better relationships between law enforcement and the public following several instances across the country that imply that relationship is deteriorating.

#### [State workers more engaged, optimistic, survey finds](#)

From the Lansing State Journal, 5/12

LANSING – Michigan state employees are more engaged with and optimistic about their jobs than in past years, but remain more pessimistic than employees in other industries.

#### [Deaf juror glad to do her duty for justice's sake](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/9

Tracy Straub's eyes shifted between witnesses on the stand, exhibits displayed on a TV screen and sign language interpreters as she sat in a Detroit courtroom.

#### ['Homosexuality is a behavior' says anti-gay-marriage billboards appearing across Michigan](#)

From MLive, 5/8

DETROIT – Anti-gay billboards are popping up across Michigan as Supreme Court justices consider legalizing gay marriage in the U.S.

#### [Thin line separates Detroit, Baltimore](#)

From the Detroit News, 5/8

A man is cuffed, loaded into the back of a Baltimore police van and then dies from a spine injury while in custody.

#### [Michigan police shootings have prompted anger, not violence, as leaders build relationships](#)

From MLive, 5/8

Milton Hall. Luqman Ameen Abdullah. And most recently, Terrance Kellom.

#### [Arab American National Museum reaches a milestone](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/7

The Arab American National Museum in Dearborn has a lot to celebrate on its 10th anniversary.

#### [Damon Keith documentary to premiere in June](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/7

From scrubbing floors as a janitor to pounding gavels as a prominent federal judge, Detroit civil rights legend Damon J. Keith has accomplished plenty.

#### [Islamic State threat targets Detroit Muslim leaders](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/7

Local Shia Muslim leaders were encouraged to have extra security during Friday prayer services after an anonymous, unverified online threat was apparently issued by the Islamic State terrorist group naming Michigan.

#### [Judge apologizes after mom was told not to breastfeed](#)

From the Lansing State Journal, 5/7

LANSING — Ingham County's Chief Circuit Court Judge apologized today, acknowledging that a mother was ordered by a Friend of the Court referee not to breastfeed her baby in a hearing last week.

#### [ACLU calls for suspension of Detroit task force sought after fatal shooting](#)

From MLive, 5/7

DETROIT – The American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan and other groups are calling for the suspension of a multi-jurisdictional police task force involved in the fatal shooting of a 20-year-old Detroit man.

#### [TEDxGR 2015: 4 talks challenge perceptions of racism, gender, disability](#)

From MLive, 5/7

GRAND RAPIDS – Challenging topics like racism, gender identity and immigration dominated much of the TEDxGrand Rapids conference afternoon session.

#### [Controversial mass email about same-sex marriage prompts changes to Hillsdale College policies](#)

From MLive, 5/7

HILLSDALE – Hillsdale College is revisiting its communications policies after the mass distribution of a controversial email advertising a prayer gathering "for God to give the Justices and the courts wisdom" as the U.S. Supreme Court deliberates same-sex marriage.

#### [Farmington Hills man charged with ethnic intimidation](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/7

A Farmington Hills man has been charged with ethnic intimidation after he called a 7-Eleven clerk ethnic slurs and threatened to kill him.

#### ['A Conversation About Growing Up Black'](#)

From the New York Times, 5/7

Imagine strangers crossing the street to avoid you, imagine the police arbitrarily stopping you, imagine knowing people fear you because of the color of your skin. Many of this country's young black men and boys don't have to imagine.

#### ['Walk-a-Mile-in-My-Shoes' rally aims to end developmental disability stigma](#)

From MLive, 5/6

LANSING – About 3,000 advocates of mental health awareness flooded the state Capitol lawn Wednesday afternoon to for the 11th Annual ""Walk-a-Mile-in-My-Shoes" Rally.



#### [Flint and Florida state reps to address students' racial discrimination claims](#)

From MLive, 5/6

FLINT – Weeks after a group of Flint students claimed they experienced racial discrimination at an Econo Lodge hotel and a Wendy's restaurant during a trip to Florida, legislators in the Sunshine State are speaking up.

#### [School board member's racially-charged Facebook post prompts cultural training](#)

From MLive, 5/6

An Ypsilanti Community School board member and University of Michigan employee made comments about the new U.S. Attorney General that prompted the school board to move forward with cultural proficiency training.

#### [Why does U-M accept so few low-income students?](#)

From Bridge Magazine, 5/5

Kalli Hooper and Mark Schlissel have never met. As things stand, they likely never will.

#### [Abdrabboh: Yes, hate crimes happen here](#)

From the Detroit News, 5/5

The U.S. Department of Justice defines hate crime as “the violence of intolerance and bigotry, intended to hurt and intimidate someone because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.” Recently, waves went through the Arab American community in Dearborn when a social media post by a witness said an Arab-American male was attacked and beaten at a Kroger shopping store. The witness’ post said, “I hear ‘ISIS,’ I hear ‘terrorist,’ I hear ‘go back to your country’ and ‘raghead.’ Then, “all of a sudden, the man is punching this Arabic man, fists started flying.”

#### [Protests are fine, but policy is where change needs to happen](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 5/4

On the Thursday before Baltimore burned, Mr. Lee went to Washington.

#### [WMU to pay \\$35,000 to settle free-speech lawsuit filed by Kalamazoo Peace Center](#)

From MLive, 5/4

KALAMAZOO – Western Michigan University will pay \$35,000 to settle a federal lawsuit filed last year by a student group that said the university's policies are unconstitutional and restrict free speech on campus.

#### [Obama Finds a Bolder Voice on Race Issues](#)

From the New York Times, 5/4

As he reflected on the festering wounds deepened by race and grievance that have been on painful display in America's cities lately, President Obama on Monday found himself thinking about a young man he had just met named Malachi.

#### [Anti-gay shop owner in west Michigan defies backlash](#)

From the Detroit News, 5/4

Grandville — When a west Michigan auto shop owner announced last month he wouldn't serve gays, the response was quick and visceral.

### [Race, Class and Neglect](#)

From the New York Times, 5/4

Every time you're tempted to say that America is moving forward on race — that prejudice is no longer as important as it used to be — along comes an atrocity to puncture your complacency. Almost everyone realizes, I hope, that the Freddie Gray affair wasn't an isolated incident, that it's unique only to the extent that for once there seems to be a real possibility that justice may be done.

### [Hurons logo disagreement continues between EMU, Native American student group](#)

From the Ypsilanti Courier, 5/2

YPSILANTI - The Native American student group at Eastern Michigan University is continuing to oppose the use of the Hurons logo, which the group spoke against during a rally last week.

### [Police Killings Rise Slightly, Though Increased Focus May Suggest Otherwise](#)

From the New York Times, 4/30

Their names have become both a litany and rallying cry: Michael Brown. Tamir Rice. Eric Garner. Walter L. Scott. And now Freddie Gray.

### [How The University Of Washington President Is Opening Up The Conversation On Race](#)

From the Huffington Post, 4/29

In late February, students at the University of Washington marched through campus to deliver a list of demands for a more equitable school, including bringing affirmative action back to admissions and actively recruiting diverse students and supporting them to stay on campus till graduation. Students in the march said others shouted racial slurs at them as they walked down Greek row.